



CATHOLIC ACADEMY
OF BRIDGEPORT



2020-2021 Annual Report

Our school mission

The four campuses of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport provide a Christ-centered, academically rigorous learning environment where cultural diversity is welcomed and celebrated. Students are nurtured, encouraged and challenged in preparation for a successful life of leadership and service.

Our student mission

I am a Catholic Academy of Bridgeport student. I am worthy of the love of God. I am worthy of an excellent education. I am worthy of respect from my classmates and teachers. I recognize my obligation to return that respect and to reflect the light of Christ by living a successful life of leadership and service to others.



Welcome Message

As Bishop of the Diocese of Bridgeport and Chair of the Board of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, we are pleased to share with you our Annual Report for the 2020–2021 academic year.

During this past school year, the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport continued to be a pillar of faith and strength for its students and their families. Following strict COVID health safety protocols, the Academy's enrollment remained stable throughout the pandemic and experienced a significant upswing in the fall. This was a great achievement considering that COVID brought a new set of financial hurdles to our student families. We give our deepest thanks to all our faithful donors for providing over \$2.2M in funds for need-based student financial assistance this past year.

Our Board, Executive Director Angela Pohlen, and four principals know that the success of our Academy begins and ends with having excellent teachers and providing for superior academics. We are more excited than ever about our talented lineup of principals and teachers and have launched a Merit Pay initiative to better recognize their incredible achievements. Teachers have completed training in the areas of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Math Works, actively use Google Classroom to assign, evaluate and discuss classwork, and are using brand new textbooks as part of the now completed Math curriculum review. During the 2021-22 academic

year, we will review the English and Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, followed by Social Studies and Specials in 2022-23, and Religion and Science in 2023-24.

While our staff provide the backbone for the Academy's success, Board and staff members are working together to bring permanence to our efforts through the Marketing and Enrollment and Development task forces. The task forces are ensuring that the Academy expands its mission in Bridgeport and creates a bright future for thousands more students. With your continued support and prayers, we look forward to further growth and even greater success in our school for decades to come.



THE MOST REVEREND FRANK J. CAGGIANO
BISHOP OF BRIDGEPORT



JOHN KREITLER
CHAIR OF THE BOARD



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CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: Dr. Allison Hurtt, principal of St. Augustine campus; Sr. Elizabeth Doyle, principal of St. Raphael campus; Mr. Gene Holmes, principal of St. Andrew campus; Mrs. Angela Pohlen, executive director of CAB; Mrs. Pat Griffin, principal of St. Ann campus.

Thriving in Adversity

In last year's Annual Report letter, I predicted that we would define our best selves in adversity—who knew I would be so prescient! I could not be more proud of the fact that at no time in the last school year did we use the challenges of the pandemic to excuse ourselves from striving for excellence. In fact, we pushed ourselves harder, and the results have been incredible.

Our principals and teachers must take the lion's share of the credit for the myriad day-to-day successes we had last year. We kept our doors open—five days a week—so that our instructors and students could teach and learn the best: in person. We proved that it could be done safely, and when challenges arose, we rose to meet them. When we knew positive COVID numbers would increase due to travel for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, we initiated a planned five-week transition to online learning, but we also met the needs of our families by providing a place for children to stay if parents needed to work and had no childcare. We opened Remote Learning Annexes on our campuses, where students could be dropped off in smaller numbers, supervised by Academy staff, and kept on track with their learning. With the help of some resources through our Board of Directors, we then hosted a free Academy-wide COVID testing event the weekend before we re-opened so that staff and families could be sure that they were returning to a safe and healthy environment. The coordination and

cooperation that needed to happen among leadership, administration, teachers, parents, and students for all of those parts to move fluidly together is staggering but not surprising knowing our community. In hindsight, the pivots and adaptations we managed still look impossible, but ours is a community in which God is our greatest ally and comfort, and as Jesus said in Matthew 19:26, *"For human beings this is impossible but for God all things are possible."*

I wish to thank all of you for your prayers and devotion to our little but mighty school over this last year. I hope that as you review this Annual Report, you will be proud of the impact you help us to make in the lives of nearly 900 children and their families. It is a privilege to work in the vineyard with you.

ANGELA POHLEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the 2020-2021 school year:

24



members of our faculty attended a week-long online professional development class through Columbia University Teachers College

\$60k

was spent to purchase new standardized math textbooks across all four campuses as part of our formal curriculum review process



100%



of our teachers became fluent with the Google Classroom suite of apps to help students access learning materials, even when absent



access to Chrome-books or iPads was provided to all of our students, plus we provided hot spots for families in need

78

of our 8th graders got to participate in an online Q&A with the Academy Award-winning producer of a documentary about the Holocaust as part of their Social Studies unit on WWII



4 out of 4

of our campuses facilitated Christian service projects for their school communities—including food and clothing drives and card-writing campaigns—despite pandemic challenges



800

students were educated on our four campuses

1st

school in the area to implement a Remote Learning Annex so working parents had a safe place for their children to learn during lockdown



record-time spent taking Distance Learning online so all of our faculty was trained and our students did not miss a beat

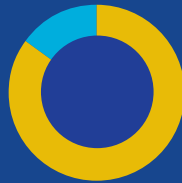
“The Catholic Academy of Bridgeport far surpassed what other area schools did last year during COVID-19. When we say we offer **‘Something More,’** we truly mean it. ”

ANGELA POHLEN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CAB

Did you know?

83%

of our families live at or below the poverty level



85%

of our families cannot afford our tuition of \$5,150

\$2,000

is the average tuition our families can pay

TOTAL TUITION \$5,150

99%

of our students go on to college or some other form of secondary education



100%

of CAB students graduate from high school



100%



of our students are offered free breakfast, snack and lunch each school day

200+

overall donors gave last year

→ 36 & \$1,600
were first-time donors was the average new gift

147

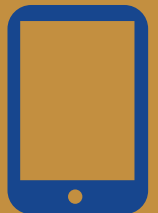
devices linked in to our first-ever virtual fundraiser

80%

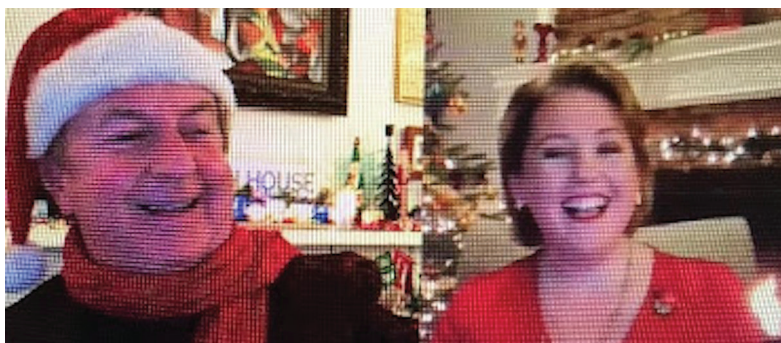
of our donors who sponsored a student recommitted to their child

\$2.2M

raised and awarded for need-based scholarship



Special Events & Highlights 2020-2021



We were so grateful to everyone who tuned in to our first-ever **Candy Canes & Cocktails** virtual fundraiser and helped us raise \$308,000, as well as to special guest and tenor Dennis McNeil, pictured here with CAB Executive Director Angela Pohlen.



Our **9th Annual Golf Classic** was a record-breaker, with more than \$560,000 raised for need-based scholarship. We were delighted to honor Barbara and Brad Evans at the event (pictured above left with Sr. Joan Magnetti) along with members of our premiere graduating class of sponsored students and their sponsors.

Twenty-four foursomes enjoyed a day of golf under blue skies followed by a lively cocktail reception and auction. Pictured above right, left to right, are: Dennis Boyd, Chris Garcia, John Kreitler and Bob Devlin.

Celebrating “Leaders” & “Stars”

In 2013, we launched Leaders of Tomorrow (LOT), designed to offer individuals the opportunity to help pay for the education of one or more students at our Academy each year. What started with 11 donors sponsoring 11 students grew to more than 60 individuals fully or partially sponsoring 100+ children by last year.

This past May, during our Golf Classic, we were thrilled to celebrate our first-ever graduating class of sponsored students along with their faithful and generous sponsors. We also marked another milestone that day: the relaunching of our LOT program as “Rising Stars.” Our goal is to significantly grow the number of sponsorships over the next several years and provide more children the gift of a lifetime. We know that sponsors not only provide financial support to our students in need, they also represent the confidence our girls and boys require in order to succeed through elementary and middle school and beyond. We are so grateful to all those who have partnered with us—or plan on partnering with us—on this journey. With your help, we are changing lives and helping to break the cycle of poverty in Bridgeport and beyond.



Wanting “*something better*”

When Rayane and Edmar Cristino’s oldest child, Eloa, was about to enter 2nd grade for what would have been her third year in a Bridgeport public school, they decided to make a change.

“I had always wanted to put my kids in the Catholic school system because our family is devoutly Catholic and because I thought the public schools aren’t that great in Bridgeport. I wanted something better for my children,” said Rayane. “We searched for schools in the area that offered religion classes and we learned about the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport one day at the end of Mass at St. Charles [Borromeo Church]. A few individuals, including families of students and employees, invited us to check out the school and spoke highly of it.”

After choosing to consider CAB’s St. Ann campus, Rayane visited and recalled that “the environment had an overwhelming feeling of family and the smaller class sizes were a big plus.” She and her husband enrolled Eloa and have never looked back. “We have always felt supported by the teachers and staff no matter what. We can call them with any issue. The staff and faculty always listen and try to help wherever they can. We are very happy to have our children here.”

Today, all four Cristino children attend Catholic Academy of Bridgeport: Eli (PreK), Eric (1st), Enzo (4th), and Eloa, who is now in the 7th grade.

“The school has always gone above and beyond. They have helped our family immensely with financial assistance and have continuously supported us,” said Rayane. This includes when both Rayane and Eloa’s teacher thought Eloa might be having some learning difficulties. “They did not let us go through it alone,” said Rayane. “They went to the Board of Education with me and did whatever it took to figure out what

the issue was and how to personally help her as an individual. We found out that she actually had no learning disabilities but that she was just a shy preteen. Now, she is thriving! Principal Pat Griffin has been the best. She is so great and welcoming with all of the kids. She has so much responsibility and does it all with a smile.” Rayane says she will always recommend Catholic Academy of Bridgeport to other families. “I’ve recommended two or three families this year because we love it so much.”



Support *through it all*

Maritza and David Brunetto are products of a Catholic school education. Growing up in Peru, Maritza attended Sacred Heart elementary school and David is an alumnus of Fairfield Prep and Sacred Heart University. He also is the son of Don Brunetto, a Deacon in the Diocese of Bridgeport. So when the Brunetto's twins, Nicolo and Dino, turned 3 years old, they began looking for a Catholic school.

"I wanted my children to have the opportunity to learn about God in their everyday lives because religion is so important to me and my family," said Maritza. "Many schools have removed the teaching of religion in the classroom, but we really wanted our children to attend a school that offers religion classes so their faith could follow them and grow every day."

Colleagues of Maritza's spoke highly of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport so the Brunetto's toured CAB's St. Andrew campus. "I really loved how family-oriented the school was," said Maritza. "The students seemed so connected with each other and the teachers, and it felt like a big family." There were no PreK openings at the time, so the Brunetto's opted to go on a waitlist and send their boys to a non-Catholic preschool three days a week in Shelton, where they lived at the time. Months later when spots opened up, the Brunetto's enrolled their sons in St. Andrew and moved to Bridgeport. "The school was able to help us out financially and now we could give our children an opportunity for a better education."

But when the pandemic struck in 2019, hard times hit the Brunetto household and they were worried they might have to withdraw their boys. "My husband had a steady job for 30 years in the entertainment



business and lost his job and whole income, and I am a physical therapy assistant and the place where I worked turned into a Covid testing site, so I lost my job too." The couple decided to write a letter to the school explaining the situation and the Brunetto's received the added aid they needed. "[CAB] helped with additional financial assistance and provided computers for the boys to use for distance learning. The school was so supportive throughout everything and we were so happy the boys' education could continue regardless of the difficult circumstances."

When asked if she had any advice for families considering the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport, Maritza enthusiastically responded "Oh my gosh, where do I start? The education is excellent. The staff and faculty are just incredible...so warm and welcoming...and everyone is just so supportive of the mission. I also love that the class sizes are small so each student can get the attention and support they need from teachers, especially if they are struggling. My boys love their school and we are so happy we made the decision to send our children here."

Financial Summary



Revenue, Support & Expenses

July 2020 to June 2021

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

● Family Tuitions	\$1,859,861
● Contributions for Scholarships and Fundraising Activities	\$3,603,871
● Contributions from the Diocese through Annual Catholic Appeal	\$394,240
● Other Contributions	\$249,010
● Endowment Distribution to Operating	\$480,000

TOTAL INCOME \$6,586,982*

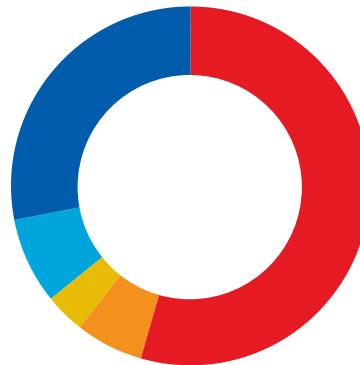
EXPENSES

● Compensation and Benefits	\$5,031,102
● Other Expenses	\$1,545,676

TOTAL EXPENSES \$6,576,778

NET INCOME (LOSS) \$10,204

* Excludes PPP funding



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MAIL A GIFT to our business offices at:
Catholic Academy of Bridgeport 63 Pequonnock Street
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Account Number: Q81-086780. Please email marisa@wcmfm.com and
prowella@diobpt.org to let them know this gift is for Catholic Academy of Bridgeport.

Why I Give



SUSAN MCGETTIGAN CARROLL

Director of the College and Career Center,
New Canaan High School, CT

Donor, supporter and CAB Rising Star
student sponsor since 2011

Widow of Richard "Dick" Carroll, 1960
alumnus of CAB's St. Augustine campus;
mother to Molly

MOLLY CARROLL COLE

Brooke East Boston
Founding Principal

Donor and supporter since 2018

Wife to Bill; mother to Libby
and Hadley

SUSAN:

"I married a Bridgeport boy whose education began at St. Augustine's which helped him win a scholarship to Fairfield Prep and finally onto Boston College. It was at that Catholic elementary school where Dick Carroll fell in love with words and numbers that became the basis for his lifetime pursuit of learning, not to mention the bedrock for the setting of his moral compass. As Dick found professional success, he credited the strong foundation he received through his Catholic education and vowed to support it every chance he could, especially in his hometown through the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. I work in a world class school district and hate the thought that your education can be defined by your zip code. The administrators, principals and teachers of the Catholic Academy schools do an excellent job each day preparing a new generation of learners to face the challenges ahead giving them the solid educational underpinning through a values based curriculum which will serve them well. It is an honor to continue Dick's support of the Catholic Academy, especially in its Rising Star program. As Benjamin Franklin said 'An investment in knowledge always pays the best dividend'."

MOLLY:

"My Dad always spoke so fondly of his 'Bridgeport roots,' and his Catholic education at St. Augustine's was an important part of those roots. When he passed away in 2018, I knew that I wanted to support a program that played such a pivotal role in his life, and continues to do so in the lives of so many Bridgeport scholars. Since graduating from college, I have worked in schools in low-income communities, beginning with the Teach for America Program. For the past 10 years, I have worked for the Brooke Charter Schools network in Boston, MA where students have consistently proven that a zip code does not determine academic success. Like Brooke, the work that the staff and community at the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport do on a daily basis to close the opportunity gap for their students is so important, and I am proud to support their efforts."



EXECUTIVE OFFICES
63 Pequonnock Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Thank you for
your support!

catholicacademybridgeport.org

